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NATURAL HISTORY.

THE DOVE.

This beautiful and gentle creature was called, by the Hebrews, *ioneh*, which signifies *mildness, gentleness, &c.* Parkhurst derives the Hebrew name from a root which admits the sense of *defenceless*, and *exposed to rapine and violence*; remarkable characteristics of this lovely bird, and which are accordingly noticed by some of the ancient poets.

The dove, which is used in scripture as the symbol of simplicity, innocence, and fidelity, furnishes the sacred writers with many beautiful allusions. From the earliest times, it appears to have been offered in sacrifice, (Gen. xv. 9); and in the Mosaic ritual it is repeatedly prescribed for this use.

The dove is universally admitted to be one of the most beautiful objects in nature. The brilliancy of her plumage, the splendor of her eye, the innocence of her look, the excellence of her dispositions, and the purity of her manners, have been the theme of admiration and praise in every age. To the snowy whiteness of her wings, and the rich golden hues which adorn her neck, the inspired Psalmist has been thought to allude in these elegant strains: 'Though ye have lien among the pots, yet ye shall be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold,' Psalm lxxviii. 13. Various explanations have been given of this passage. Dr Harris after having remarked that the whole of the psalm appears to be a triumphal ode for success in battle, inquires how is it possible that the persons who had, put to flight these kings, and had taken the spoil home to their families, should lie among the pots! How should these soldiers suffer such disgrace, and that at the very time when they enjoy the victory!—This is inconceivable; but if we recollect that the *standard* of the dove was used as a military ensign, and suppose it to be alluded to here, then we have an entirely distinct view of the article, and may understand it accordingly:

That the dove was a *military ensign*, may be gathered from the history in the *Chronicon Samaritanum*, where we read that 'the Romans placed a pigeon [or dove]

on Mount Gerizim, to hinder them from going thither to worship with troops. Some Samaritans attempted to go up; but the bird discovered them, and cried out, *The Hebrews!* The guards awoke, and slew those who were coming up.' Understand here a military sentry and ensign, and 'the dove' becomes intelligible at once.

The *paleness* of the kings, who accompanied this banner, is extremely characteristic of their appearance when they saw their sacred emblem cast down, and trampled on by the Israelites; or, if they themselves, in their haste cast it down, that they might flee the more swiftly, the shame is equal.

These and other considerations lead to the conclusion, 1st. that the dove was certainly used as a military ensign, and 2dly, that as the Assyrians were eminent and ancient worshippers of the dove, it might be supposed to be appropriately their banner or standard. This will authorise a translation of several passages of scripture different from our present public version.

Jeremiah speaking of the ravages which would be committed in Judea by Nebuchadnezzar, says, 'The land is desolate because of the fierceness of the dove.' And again, 'Let us go to our own people, to avoid the sword of the dove.' Each of these places is intelligible, by supposing that the king of the Chaldeans is referred to, who bore a dove in his ensigns, in memory of Semiramis.

The manners of the dove are as engaging as her form is elegant, and her plumage rich and beautiful. She is the chosen emblem of simplicity, gentleness, purity, and feminine timidity. Our blessed Lord alludes with striking effect to her amiable temper, in that well-known direction to his disciples, 'Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves,' Matt. x. 16. Wisdom, without simplicity, degenerates into cunning—simplicity, without wisdom, into silliness: united, the one corrects the excess or supplies the defects of the other, and both become the objects of praise; but separated, neither the wisdom of the serpent, nor the simplicity of the dove, obtains in this passage the Saviour's commendation. The character which is compounded of both makes the nearest approach to the true standard of Christian excellence. The wisdom of the serpent enables the believer to discern between good and evil, truth and error, that, having proved all things, he may hold fast that which is good: the simplicity of the dove renders him inoffensive and sincere, that he may not deceive nor injure his neighbor. Such were the qualities which the Saviour recommended to his followers, and his apostle wished the Romans to obtain; 'I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil,' chap. xvi. 19.

It is supposed, that in *Psalms*. x. 21, there is an allusion to the custom, so long and extensively adopted, of employing these birds as couriers to carry tidings from one place to another: 'Curse not the king, no, not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber; for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and they which have wings shall tell the matter.'

In the New Testament, the dove is the chosen emblem of the Holy Spirit, who, in the economy of grace, is not only the messenger of peace and joy to sinful men, but also the author of those gentle and peaceable dispositions of minds which characterise in every part of the world, the true believer in Christ: The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith [or fidelity], meekness, temperance.' Gal. v. 22.

During the siege of Samaria, by Benhadad, king of Syria, we are informed (2 Kings vi. 25) that so pressing was the famine, an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of *dove's dung* for five peices of silver. This, however, was not what its name would seem to import, but a kind of pulse or pea, which is common in Judea, and to which the Arabians give this name, See 2 Sam. xvii. 29.

BIOGRAPHY.

DEMOSTHENES.

Demosthenes, the greatest orator of antiquity, was the son of an Athenian who acquired great wealth by manufacturing sword-blades, and was born about 380 B. C. Having lost his father when a child, his education was neglected, but at the age of seventeen he determined to study eloquence, though his lungs were weak, his pronunciation inarticulate, and his gestures awkward. But these impediments he conquered by perseverance, by declaiming as he walked up the side of steep hills, also on the sea-shore, when the weather was rough, and by putting pebbles in his mouth. To acquire a good gesture he used to practise before a mirror; and to correct a bad habit of shrugging up one of his shoulders, he placed a sharp pointed sword just over it in the place where he stood. Not being ready at first in making extemporaneous harangues, he studied his orations with care in a cave, on which account his enemies used to say, they smelt of the lamp. When he came into public life, the encroachments of Phillip of Macedon alarmed all the Grecian states, particularly Athens. He depicted the ambitious designs of Phillip with so much effect, that similar orations are to this day called *Phillipics*. When that monarch was about to invade Attica, Demosthenes was